

## CELTIC PRAYER SERVICE

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### Summary:

The Celtic tradition has a strong focus on the Trinity and an appropriate perspective on nature. This service was led by the above people in a Briercrest seminary chapel. Please use songs according to CCLI guidelines.

Length: 4 pages

# Celtic Prayer Service – Seminary Chapel May 11, 2006

Focus: An emphasis of any Celtic service is silence, meditation, the Trinity (repetition in “three’s”), and creation/nature themes. The shape and order of the service itself can be adapted to fit any location and tradition, while it is more the content that makes the Celtic service “Celtic”. We made sure to read everything very slowly and separated to let the words ‘sink-in’. This service was prepared for Briercrest Seminary’s weekly chapel gathering in Caronport, Saskatchewan. As part of our learning environment, we often worship in ancient traditions to expose students to traditions other than their own.

Setup: The chairs are in a shape of Celtic cross, including the circle on the cross, leaving some chairs looking oddly out of place (which we liked!) Music was done with acoustic guitar, penny whistle, and clarinet, using no amplification. Traditionally lots of candles are used as well with focus on Christ as Light.

Opening Music – 10 minutes of Celtic Hymns on CD before service started to ‘set the mood.’

WELCOME..... Leah

*Cai Mille Failte!* [seh meel FAHL-cheh]

- A Celtic saying meaning “100,000 Welcomes.” We taught this saying to the seminary community and it was also on the PowerPoint)

Meaning of the Celtic cross

- It is a reclaimed pagan symbol that early missionaries used to teach the pagan people about Christ. The cross represents Christ; the circle represents his eternal nature (a never-ending circle) and Christ as the eternal connection between heaven and earth.

OPENING SENTENCES.....Leah

**All: One thing I have asked of the Lord,  
this is what I seek:  
that I may dwell in the house of the Lord  
all the days of my life;  
to behold the beauty of the Lord  
and to seek Him in His temple.**

Leader: Who is it that you seek?

**Response: We seek the Lord our God.**

Leader: Do you seek Him with all your heart?

**Response: Amen. Lord, have mercy.**

Leader: Do you seek Him with all your soul?

**Response: Amen. Lord, have mercy.**

Leader: Do you seek Him with all your mind?

**Response: Amen. Lord, have mercy.**

Leader: Do you seek Him with all your strength?  
Response: **Amen. Christ, have mercy.**

DECLARATION OF FAITH .....Brian

To whom shall we go?  
You have the words of eternal life,  
and we have believed and have come to know  
that You are the Holy One of God.

Praise to You, Lord Jesus Christ,  
King of endless glory.

SONG – *In Christ Alone* by Keith Getty, Stuart Townend  
CCLI Song#3350395, © 2001 Thankyou Music (Admin. by EMI Christian Music  
Publishing)

SCRIPTURE – *leave time for silence after each*

Psalm 37:8.....Brian  
Proverbs 10:17-19.....Mark  
Psalm 37:8.....Brian  
James 1:19-20.....Nancy  
Psalm 37:8.....Brian

MEDITATION .....Nancy

The Celtic tradition had a rich heritage of bringing prayer into the daily activities people were involved in. Tasks like kindling the morning fire were a time to reflect and pray. They also held a value for creation and were equally intense about reflecting the Trinity in their prayers. This is an example of a prayer said during the kindling of the fire:

I will kindle my fire this morning  
In the presence of the holy angels of heaven  
Without malice, without jealousy, without envy,  
But the Holy Son of God to shield me.  
God, kindle Thou in my heart within  
A flame of love to my neighbor,  
To my foe, to my friend, to my kindred all.

CELTIC PRAYER FOR OUR COMMUNITY.....Mark

In keeping with this tradition, what might a Celtic prayer for a seminary student look like? Borrowing from some Celtic writings and then moving it into our context, the following is our Celtic prayer for a seminary student.

*A Seminary Student's Morning Prayer*  
Our God, as we awaken to a new day you have given us,  
May we remember that you are the almighty Creator.  
It is you who made the land and the sea.  
You give life to all.

You light the light of the sun  
You furnish the light of the night  
You make springs in dry land  
You inspire all there is.  
So as we walk to class this morning through the fields you created,  
Help us to attune our senses to appreciate your handiwork,  
Let the sun warm our bodies and remind us of our Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Lord today as we meet others you have called to this place,  
May you be in the heart of each to whom we speak,  
and in the mouth of each one who speaks to us.  
And Lord as we sit at the feet of those who will teach us this day  
may they see in us a flicker of what you are hoping to do in us,  
and may You help them to fan that flicker into a flame that will burn brightly for  
you.

For today Lord we will spend time reading your word  
and exploring many words that have been written about you  
as Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

May this time never be an academic exercise alone,  
but may we too be keenly aware of all you are doing in us.

Then God as we finally sit before our computers to reflect  
and capture all that we have seen and heard,  
may this too be done with an awareness that  
you are within us to purify us;

above us to draw us up;

beneath us to sustain us;

before us to lead us;

behind us to restrain us;

and around us to protect us.

For as it was, as it is, and as it shall be  
you are the God of Grace, the God in Trinity!

PRAYERS FOR OTHERS.....Mark

This resembles "Prayers for the People" and walks the gathered community through prayers for the world, for leaders, for the community, those who are sick, the church, etc. The leader prays accordingly for each category and then invites the gathered community to raise their requests aloud for all to hear.

CANTICLE.....Brian

This is read slowly and meditatively.

Christ, as a light  
illumine and guide me.

Christ, as a shield  
overshadow me.

Christ under me;

Christ over me;

Christ beside me  
on my left and my right.  
This day be within and without me,  
lowly and meek, yet all-powerful.  
Be in the heart of each to whom I speak;  
in the mouth of each who speaks unto me.  
This day be within and without me,  
lowly and meek, yet all-powerful.  
Christ as a light;  
Christ as a shield;  
Christ beside me  
on my left and my right.

SONG – *Be Thou My Vision*, Words by Eleanor Henrietta Hull/Mary Elizabeth Byrne  
CCLI Song #30639 © Public Domain

BLESSING.....Leah

May the peace of the Lord Christ go with you,  
wherever He may send you.  
May He guide you through the wilderness,  
protect you through the storm.  
May He bring you home rejoicing  
at the wonders He has shown you.  
May He bring you home rejoicing  
once again into our doors.  
In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen

DOXOLOGY – (Old 100<sup>th</sup> a.k.a. *Praise God from whom all blessings flow*) by Louis Bourgeois

CCLI Song #56204, © Public Domain

This was sung because it is tradition in our community, but is very fitting in a Celtic service because of the Trinitarian focus of the hymn. We sang it with the penny whistle playing the melody line.

Celtic Worship Resources:

[www.fantasy-ireland.com/celtic-crosses.html](http://www.fantasy-ireland.com/celtic-crosses.html)

<http://www.northumbriacommunity.org/PraytheOffice/> → Liturgical readings by corresponding day

<http://www.explorefaith.org/prayer/essays/celtic.html>

<http://www.oursanctuary.net/celts.html>